

Civil Rights Timeline

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1783 Massachusetts becomes the first state to outlaw slavery.

1857 In the case of Dred Scott v. Sandford, the U.S. Supreme Court rules blacks cannot become citizens of the United States.

1863 President Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing slaves in states that had seceded from the Union.

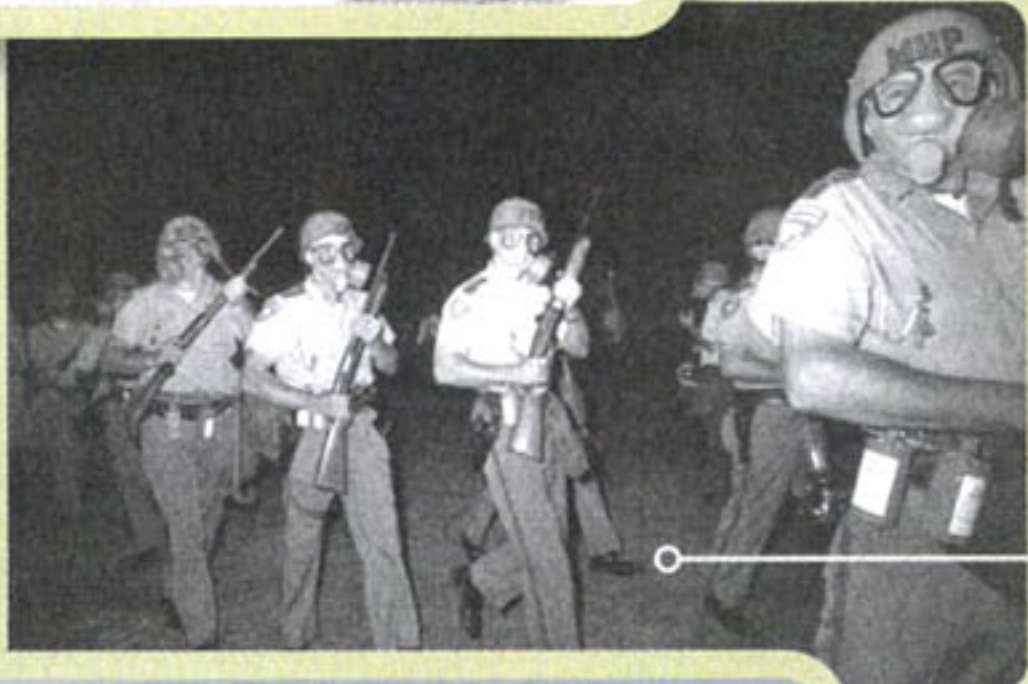
1865 At the end of the Civil War, the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolishes slavery.

1868 The 14th Amendment requires all states to provide equal protection under the law to all persons, effectively granting citizenship to blacks.

1896 In the case of Plessy v. Ferguson, the U.S. Supreme Court rules it is O.K. to separate blacks and whites under the doctrine of "separate but equal." This applied to all aspects of life, including schools, theaters, water fountains and public transportation.

1954 In the case of Brown v. The Board of Education, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that separate public schools are unequal and therefore unfair. The ruling overturned Plessy v. Ferguson and paved the way for integration – efforts to create equal opportunities for people of all races.

1955 While sitting in the section of a Montgomery, Ala., public bus marked for blacks only, a black woman named Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat to a white passenger. Parks is jailed and charged with disorderly conduct, sparking the Montgomery Bus Boycott, during which black citizens refuse to ride city buses. Without the fees normally paid by black riders, the city is under serious economic stress. One year later, the U.S. Supreme Court declares the Alabama law requiring separate



seats for blacks and whites to be unconstitutional. Historians consider this one of the first victories of the U.S. civil rights movement.

1957 The governor of Arkansas calls in National Guard troops to prevent nine black students from entering a public school, even though federal law said they had the right to attend that school. Twenty days later, President Dwight Eisenhower orders troops from the U.S. Army to escort the students into school.

1962 James Meredith becomes the first black student at the University of Mississippi. His enrollment sparks outrage in the Mississippi governor's office and provokes riots on the campus, which prompts President John Kennedy to call in federal troops and U.S. marshals. Two people die in the violence.

1963 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivers his "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, D.C.

Read All About It

Read Dr. King's complete speech at www.boyslife.org/links/kingspeech.



1964 Congress passes the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits race discrimination in schools, public places, employment and government.

1965 The National Voting Rights Act removes several roadblocks that are preventing African-Americans from voting.

1967 Thurgood Marshall is the first black to be named to the Supreme Court.

1990 Douglas Wilder is sworn in as governor of Virginia. He is the nation's first African-American to be elected governor.

2008 Barack Obama becomes the first African-American to be elected president of the United States.✦